Community leadership

Three of the four entrepreneurs are eldest sons and two of them are heads of sub-clans. The third expects to be when the present holder, his father's younger brother, dies. All four have or had elective status in the community, in religious, political or economic institutions. Three of the four are or have been church councillors,[1] two have been local government councillors,[2] and three directors of the Orokaiva Coffee Growers' Co-operative. The extensive time these men give to community leadership (an average of 7.6 hours weekly) contrasts strongly with that of Inonda and Sivepe villagers (0.5 hours).

While the others seem to have been willing to accept leadership roles among villagers, D has declined nomination as a councillor and several other roles and has less contact with village society. This is perhaps due to his being a stranger to this area.

A, B and C claim to have gone to considerable trouble to encourage the people of surrounding villages to engage in cash-cropping. In B's case at least there is clear evidence that this is so. Apart from active encouragement, their enterprises could be expected to have had significant demonstration effects. The fact that villages adjacent to those of the two longest established entrepreneurs, A and B, have a higher number of trees per man than other villages in the census division supports this suggestion.

Demonstration effects, however, appear to be less in the entrepreneur's own village, where he is in all cases envied and resented by many. My impression from living among the Orokaiva is that the prestige of the entrepreneurs increases as one gets further away in a radius of five miles or so (perhaps ten in the case of B) and decreases again thereafter. A and B in particular often accommodate strangers on long journeys on foot, and B has for many years had a special house which is available to any foot traveller. Distant villagers, returning labourers, children going to and from boarding school and others from up to fifty miles away stay overnight at B's house. No charge is made, no gift expected or usually given. In fact B, who is widely acclaimed for his hospitality to strangers, usually supplies them with vegetable foods.

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[1] Elected annually, usually one per village. A retired in favour of his eldest son and B retired when the refugees from the Mount Lamington villages (who had elected him) left their temporary settlement near B's coffee plot. He was asked by the village to be their church councillor but declined as he lived outside the village and the role of councillor ideally requires constant attendance in the village.

[2] Elected triennially. Each represents several villages. A retired owing to age. B was defeated.

It is thus understandable that though the entrepreneurs are often not acceptable in leadership roles in their own villages, they are acceptable in elective roles where the selection lies with a wider community. It is likely that the stimulus they give to economic change among the Orokaiva is considerable. When they achieve their goal of owning motor transport, which gives tremendous prestige, many will consider that their 'way' has been substantiated and the impact of their example will be multiplied.

Summary

Data are presented on the four rural entrepreneurs among the Orokaiva. Because the sample is so small few generalisations can be made. All had travelled much more widely than the average villager, had been in paid employment for longer and had held posts of greater skill and responsibility than the average villager. Whereas most Orokaiva people established their gardens on their traditional lands, the entrepreneurs have deliberately not done so. The three who had developed their enterprises without financial help were all eldest sons who benefited from the labour of junior relatives. All have attempted to employ permanent labour, but none has succeeded.

There were marked differences between the work patterns of the entrepreneurs and those of villagers. The entrepreneurs spent less time than villagers did on subsistence gardening, but twenty times more in cash-cropping and trading; they spent much less time on traditional social obligations and much more on community leadership.

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